

Serial No. 09/496,421
Docket No. 24705/99
NEC.153

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REMARKS

Applicant concurrently files herewith a Petition and Fee for a Three-Month Extension of Time.

Entry of this Amendment is believed proper since no new issues are being presented to the Examiner which would require further consideration and/or search.

Claims 26-31 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 32-34 have been canceled. Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication that claims 26-31 are allowed.

It is noted that the claim amendments herein are made only for more particularly pointing out the invention, and not for distinguishing the invention over the prior art, narrowing the claims, or for any statutory requirements of patentability.

Further, it is noted that, notwithstanding any claim amendments made herein, Applicant's intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements, even if amended herein or later during prosecution.

FORMAL MATTERS AND CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that claims 26-31, all the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic

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or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiencies in fees or to credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully submitted,



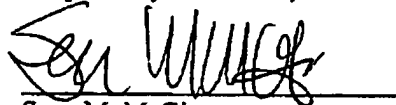
Sean M. McGinn
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Date: 2/17/04
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FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that I am filing this paper via facsimile, to Group Art Unit 2815, at (703) 872-9306, on February 17, 2004.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sean M. McGinn
Reg. No. 34,386

Date: 2/17/04